Chadwick

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

The Christian Freeman.

A MONTHLY UNITARIAN JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

o. 12.—VOL. XXIII.] DECEMBER, 1879. [NEW SERIES.—PRICE 1½d.

POOR RELATION'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

THE evening was raw and there was now on the streets, genuine London now, half-thawed and trodden and efiled with mud. I remember it well. had arrived from South America *via* outhampton, I sat in my room at Morley's Hotel, Charing Cross, and oked gloomily at the fountains, walked p and down the floor discontentedly, nd fiercely tried my best to feel glad hat I was a wanderer no more, and hat I had indeed got home at last.

I poked up my fire, and took a long ook backward upon my past life, hrough the embers. I remembered ow my childhood had been embittered y dependence, how my rich and espectable uncle, whose ruling passion vas vain-glory, had looked on my xistence as a nuisance, not so much ecause he was obliged to open his urse to pay for my clothing and ducation, as because that, when a man, e thought I could reflect no credit upon is name. I remembered how in those lays I had a soul for the beautiful, and certain almost womanish tenderness f heart, which, by dint of much sneering, had been successfully extracted rom me. I remembered my uncle's nconcealed relief at my determination o go abroad and seek my fortune, the old good-bye of my only cousin, the onely, bitter farewell to England hardly weetened by the impatient hopes that onsumed rather than cheered me—he hopes of home and gold, won by my wn exertions, with which I should yet vring from those who despised me, the vorthless respect which they denied me ow.

Sitting there at the fire, I rang the ell, and the waiter came to me; an old man whose face I remembered. I asked him some questions. Yes, he knew Mr. George Rutland; recollected that many years ago he used to stay at Morley's when he came to London. The old gentleman had always staid there. But Mr. George was too grand for Morley's now.

Having obtained all the information I desired, I wrote him a letter; told him I was his poor relation and would be down to see him. I folded this missive and placed it in its envelope. "I shall find out, once for all, what they are made of," I said, complacently, as I wrote the address, "George Rutland, Esq., Rutland Hall, Kent."

It was about seven on a frosty evening when I arrived at the imposing entrance to Rutland Hall. No cousin George came rushing out to meet me. "Of course not," "I am unused to their formal manners in this country. He is lying in wait for me on the mat inside." I was admitted by a solemn person as quietly and mechanically as though my restoration to home and kindred were a thing that had happened regularly in his presence every day since his birth. I had to travel a considerable distance before I reached the room for my special use. "Dear me!" I remarked to myself when I did reach it, "I had expected to find the rooms in such a house more elegantly appointed than this!"

I made my toilet, and again submitting myself to my guide, was conveyed to the drawing-room door.

There was a blazing fire which sent eddying swirls of light through the shadows, and right in the blush of its warmth a little figure was lounging in an easy-chair. The little figure was a girl of apparently about fifteen or sixteen years of age, dressed in a short,

shabby black frock, who was evidently spoiling her eyes with reading by the firelight. She lay with her head thrown back, a mass of fair curly hair being thus tossed over the velvet cushion on which it rested, while she held her book aloft to catch the light. She was luxuriating in her solitude, and little dreaming of interruption.

"Mr. Rutland is not at home?" I said.

"No, they are all out dining."

"Indeed! Your papa, perhaps, did not get my letter?"

She blushed crimson.

"I am not a Miss Rutland," she said. "My name is Annie Ray. I am an orphan. My father was a friend of Mr. Rutland, and he takes care of me for charity. I heard a gentleman was expected. I did not think it could be to-night, though, as they all went out."

"A reasonable conclusion to come to," I thought, and thereupon began musing on the eagerness of welcome displayed by my affectionate cousin George. If I were the gentleman expected, they must have received my letter, and in it were fully set forth the day and hour of my proposed arrival. "Ah! George, my dear fellow," I said, "you are not a whit changed!"

However that may be, certain things before surmised became assured facts in my mind, and a quaint bond of sympathy became at once established between me and my companion.

"Miss Ray," I said, "what do you think of a man who, having been abroad for fifteen years, has the impudence to come home without a shilling in his pocket? Ought he not to be stoned alive?"

"You have not a shilling in your pocket! They'll sneer at you for it, and the servants will find it out. I have a pound that old Lady Thornton gave me on my birthday, and if you would take the loan of it I should be very glad. I don't want it at all, and you could pay me back when you are better off."

She said this with such business-like gravity that I felt obliged to control my inclination to laugh. She had evidently taken me under her protection. Her keen little wits foresaw snares and difficulties besetting my stay at Rutland Hall, to which my newer eyes, she imagined, must be ignorantly blind. I looked at her with amusement as she sat there seriously considering my financial interests. I had a fancy to humour this quaint, confidential relation that had sprung up so spontaneously between us. I said, gravely:

"I am very much obliged to you for your offer, and will gladly take advantage of it. Do you happen to have the pound at hand?"

She soon fetched the pound.

"I wish it had been more!" she said, wistfully, as I coolly transferred it to my pocket. "But I so seldom get money!"

Next morning at breakfast I was introduced to the family. I found them, on the whole, pretty much what I had expected. My cousin George had developed into a pompous, portly paterfamilias; and, in spite of his cool professions of pleasure, was evidently very sorry to see me. The Mamma Rutland just countenanced me, in a manner the most frigidly polite. The grown-up young ladies treated me with the most well-bred negligence. Unless I had been very obtuse indeed, I could scarcely have failed to perceive the place appointed for me in Rutland Hall. George amused himself with me for a few days, displaying to me his various fine possessions, and then, on the arrival of grander guests, left me to my own resources. The Misses Rutland endured my escort on their riding expeditions only till more eligible cavaliers appeared. As for the lady of the house, her annoyance at having me quartered indefinitely on her premises was hardly concealed. The truth was, they were new people in the circle in which they moved, and it did not suit them to have a poor relation coming suddenly among them, calling them "Cousin," and making himself at home in the house. For me, I was not blind, though none of these things did it suit me to see. I made myself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, took every sneer and snub in excellent part, and made myself as amiable and satisfied on all occasions as though I believed myself to be the most cherished inmate of the household. That this meanness

of mine should provoke their contempt I had hardly a right to complain of. Nor did I.

Whatever might be my position at Rutland Hall, Miss Ray's was simply intolerable. A spirit less brave must have been cowed and broken by it; a nature less delicate must have been blunted and made coarser. The servants openly neglected her, the children used her as they pleased; wreaked their humours on her, sparing neither blow nor taunt in their passions, and demanding from her at all times whatever it suited their capricious fancy to need. Her heavier troubles made mine look quite light.

And how did Miss Ray meet all this? She did not complain or rebel, she did not sulk nor fret. Under that well-worn frock of hers she carried a little breast-plate of sober, determined endurance. When sorely tired, there was never any cowardly submission to be seen in her grave little face; neither was there ever in her manner or words either reproach or remonstrance. She simply endured. Her large, patient eyes and mute wise mouth seemed to say, "Whatever I suffer, whatever I long to dare, gratitude shackles my limbs and seals my lips. I am saved from many things, therefore I am dumb."

The second time I met my little benefactress was a day or two after our first interview in the drawing-room. I came upon her one afternoon by chance limping down a hedge-lane which led to the back of the house, away beyond the gardens, and the kitchen gardens, and the pleasure grounds. This lane, I found, led to a large meadow, and beyond the meadow there was a wooded hill, and far beyond at the distant side of the hill there was a river. This was Miss Ray's favourite ramble, and her one avenue of escape from the torments of the nursery. I immediately began pouring forth a legion of perplexing troubles and difficulties, to all of which she listened with perfect credulity, expressing her sympathy as I went along by an expressive nod of the head, or a shrewd, swift glance. Then she gave me her wise little counsel when all was told, and went home, I believe, pondering on my case.

A certain Sir Harry arrived at Rutland Hall; I will not trouble myself to think of his second name; it is not worth remembering. He was a wealthy bachelor of high family, and his movements were watched with interest by the lady of the house. This Sir Harry had a fancy for smoking his cigar in the hedged lane, and on more than one occasion he encountered my little benefactress limping on her solitary way, and stared at the pretty fresh face under her old black hat, till it blushed with uncomfortable brilliance. She changed her track like a hunted hare, but Sir Harry hunted her out, and annoyed her with his fulsome compliments. Ere two days had passed I felt strongly inclined to exercise the horse-whip on this young gentleman's shoulders.

The boy, Tom, one fine morning, was seized with an impish inspiration to play a trick upon Miss Ray. Stealing her crutches, he walked about the nursery mimicking her poor little limp, and then marching off with them, heedless of her entreaties to have them restored, carried them in triumph out of doors, and smashed them in pieces with a hatchet. Bright, bracing days came and found her a prisoner, looking with longing eyes through the window-panes, out over the beautiful country lanes. Tom saw her patience with the most audacious indifference. But why talk about Tom? I could not help believing, nor do I intend to help believing that older heads than Tom's plotted the cruel caging of that bonnie bird.

The bird drooped on its perch; but who cared? Nurse vowed it was a shame, and showed more kindness than usual to the prisoner, but I will not venture to decide how much of this tenderness was owing to the old crown pieces which found their way from my hand to hers—all out of the pound, of course? O, yes, all out of the pound. And there was another friend who sometimes expressed an interest in Miss Ray's existence. This was that Lady Thornton whose bounty had indirectly furnished me with pocket-money. I chanced to be alone in the drawing-room when she arrived, and I seized

the opportunity to tell her the story of the crutches.

"A bad boy!" she said. "A bad, malicious boy. She must get new crutches before my Christmas party."

"Of course she must," I said, very heartily.

The old lady threw back her head, raising her fat chin in a peculiar sort of way, and looking at me direct through her spectacles.

"Indeed!" she said. "Pray, young man, what particular interest do you take in her?"

I smiled. "O, she and I are excellent friends," I said.

"Pray are you aware that Miss Ray is eighteen years of age?"

"Is she, indeed! I know nothing about the age of little girls."

* * * *

One morning, when it wanted but a week of the party, a curious event occurred. The heads of the house met in consultation on the matter in the library, before breakfast. An extraordinary thing had arrived from London at Rutland Hall. The thing was a large wooden case directed to Miss Ray. On being cargerly opened, it was found to contain a pair of crutches.

And such a pair crutches! light and symmetrical, and fanciful works of art in their way; tortoise-shell stems with silver mountings of exquisite workmanship, capped with dainty little cushions of embroidered velvet. Thunder-stricken were the elders of the house. "Who could have done such a thing?" was on every lip. Who, indeed? Who outside of Rutland Hall had ever heard of her? These crutches were costly affairs. I knew the conclusion they came to, one and all. They pitched on Sir Harry as the culprit. It was a thorn in their side, and I rubbed my hands in glee.

Having considered the question in their dismay, they decided that she should be kept in ignorance of her mysterious present. It was not fit for her to use it; it would fill her mind with absurd ideas. The wooden case and its contents were hidden away, and no word was spoken of their existence.

I waited a few days to see if the elders would relent, but to no purpose. The bird still pined on its perch. No kindly hand seemed likely to open the cage door and let it fly. There she sat, day after day, in her nursery chair, hemming aprons for nurse, or darning the children's stockings, looking longingly out of the window, and growing pale for want of fresh air. Still never rebelling, never complaining. Meanwhile the stir of Christmas preparation was agitating all the household, and the children were full of rapture at the prospect of Lady Thornton's Christmas party. There was great excitement in the nursery about pretty new dresses, wonderful fussing about ribbons and muslins and fripperies. She alone sat silent in her shabby frock. By-and-by her hands were full, bowing up sashes, sewing on tuckers, stitching rosettes on shoes. She was a nimble little workwoman, and they kept her busy. Seeing how well a lapful of bright ribbons became her, I thought it a pity she should not have a gay dress as well as the rest.

Nobody said, "Annie, what will you wear?" No one seemed to expect for a moment that she could wish to be merry with the rest. How could she go, who was so lame and had no crutches?

It happened that I had an errand to the nearest town. It was rather late when, on my return, I called at the best millinery establishment in the place, and asked for a parcel.

Yes, the parcel was ready. A large flat box. "Would the gentleman like to see the lady's pretty dress?" The box was opened, and a cloud of some airy fabric was shaken out under my eyes; I cannot, of course, describe it, but it was something white, very pure and transparent, with something else of pink just blushing through it. It was very tasteful, I pronounced, trying to look wise. There was only one fault. "Did it not seem rather long for a little girl?" I asked, remembering the figure it was to adorn, with its short skirt just coming to the top of the boots, so well worn and mended.

"O, sir," said the milliner, with dignity, "you said the young lady was eighteen years of age, and of course we have given her a flowing skirt!"

It was late in the evening when

reached home. Two merry carriage-fuls were just departing from the door when I drove up. A few minutes afterwards I was in the nursery with the milliner's parcel in my hands. There sat Cinderella, resting one flushed cheek on her hand, and contemplating the litter of scraps of ribbons, fragments of lace, scissors, flowers, and reels of cotton, which lay scattered around her. She had had a toilsome, tiresome day, and now they had got all they wanted of her, and had left her to her solitude.

A flash of pleasure sprang to her face when she saw me. "O, I thought you had gone with the rest," she said.

"No," said I, "I have not gone yet, but I am going presently. I came for you."

"For me!" she echoed in dismay. "You know I could not go. I have no dress, even if I could walk."

"A friend has sent you a dress," I said, "and I will undertake to provide the crutches. Nurse, will you please take this box, and get Miss Ray ready as quickly as possible? The carriage is waiting for us at the door. Do be quick."

By the time I returned from an exploring expedition, with the wonderful silver-and-tortoise-shell crutches under my arm, *she was ready.*

Those three simple little words mean so much that I feel I must stop and try to translate them into all they are bound to convey. They do not mean that the child whom I was wont to call my little benefactress, my little mother, had got on a nice new frock, and was equipped for a juvenile party, like other children. But they mean that there, when I came back, stood a beautiful girl by the nursery fire, in a fair, sweeping, blush-coloured robe—a lovely woman.

When I presented the crutches, nurse looked at me as though I must be some prince in disguise, out of the Arabian Nights. It was with a curious feeling that I saw her try them, not limping now, rather gliding over the nursery floor, with the little velvet cushions hidden away amidst clouds of lace and muslin under her round white shoulders, and the airy mass of the fresh-tinted gown just crushed back a little by the gleaming silver staves.

Our equipage awaited us. It was too late now to withdraw from what I had undertaken. We were soon dashing over the snowy roads to Lady Thornton's. I will not attempt to describe the remainder of that memorable evening, or the sensation caused by our arrival; the wonder and mortification of my kind relations; or the mingled pleasure and displeasure of the hostess, who, while delighted to see her little favourite, took occasion to whisper angrily in my ear, "And pray, sir, how is all this to end?"

We both felt that a storm would burst over our heads that night, and we were not wrong. None of the family from Rutland Hall took the least notice of us. When we arrived, we found Cousin George and his wife waiting for us in the library, armed, to the teeth. I saw it was to be war and no quarter.

"Sir," he said, "we have suffered your insolent intrusion long enough. You leave this house to-morrow morning."

"Cousin George," I said, "don't put yourself in a passion. I will go to-morrow morning, but upon one condition—that Miss Ray may come with me, if she will."

He looked at me perfectly aghast. "Do you know," he said, "that she is a penniless, friendless orphan, whom I have sheltered through charity?"

"I want to make her my wife," I said sternly, "if indeed, I be so fortunate as to have won her affections."

"And after that," he said, with a sneer, "how do you propose to live! Upon air or upon your friends?"

"Not upon you, George Rutland," I said, looking him steadily in the eyes. "Mark me, I have tried you out. I have sifted you all in this house, like a handful of wheat. I found you all chaff, but the one golden grain which lies on my palm. I will keep it and treasure it, if I may. God grant I may!"

"Very fine," said George, "*very* fine. Remember, however, that from this moment I wash my hands of you both."

"Amen!" I said, and bade him good-night, and turned on my heel and left him.

Early next morning I knocked at the nursery door and begged nurse to awake Miss Ray, and ask her to speak with me in the garden. I then went to wait for her. It was Christmas morning, the day of peace and good will. What I felt was scarcely peace, as I looked over the calm landscape. And yet I bore no ill-will to any man or woman. She came to me by-and-by; limping over the frosty path in her short shabby frock, and looking half ashamed of her grand new crutches. I felt relieved when I saw her so. I was shy of the dainty lady whom I had called into existence the night before.

We strolled out of the garden and into the lane, and we talked earnestly all the way. On our way back, I said:

"And you're not afraid of starving with me. You'll take the risk?"

One of her odd nods was her answer.

"Go and fetch your hat, then," said I, "and we wont even wait for breakfast. Don't bring anything else with you, not a shred. I have still some half-pence left—out of the pound you know—and we'll get all we want."

Annie returned and fetched her hat, and we set off together. An hour afterwards we were man and wife. We said our prayers side by side in the church, and then we walked back to Rutland Hall to say good-by to our kinsfolk. I believe they all thought me mad, and her a little fool; at least, until Cousin George received the cheque which I sent him next day; a cheque to cover the expenses incurred by him through his charity to Annie Ray. Then they began to wonder and to waver. I took my wife abroad and showed her the world. Time and care cured her of her lameness. It was not surprising that on our return to England her kinsfolk should scarcely recognise her, walking without crutches, and the wife of a millionaire! Half a bride-cake conciliated Lady Thornton, and the wonderful pound is still in my possession. I call it Annie's dower. The crutches, the donor of which, I beg to assure you, was *not* Sir Harry, are also preserved as family curiosities.

KEPT FROM EVIL.

Christ prayed for his disciples that they might be kept from the evil of the world, and perhaps few of us quite realise how much we have been kept from evil by loving friends, faithful guardians, and tender parents, who watched over us day and night, who prayed for us, and with us, and who tried to establish principle as the rule and guide of our conduct, and to build up within us a firm trust in the goodness of God, and in the ultimate triumph of truth and right over falsehood and wrong.

And yet can any of us say we did not, or we do not still, find it difficult always at all times to walk as under the very eyes of God. Alas! how often has each one of us to ask forgiveness from his Heavenly Father because he has failed to do the things he ought to have done, and has done the things he ought not to have done.

But if there be any that from his youth up have kept the faith—that is, kept his heart and mind and soul pure and true and faithful, and walked uprightly in his daily life as before the face of his Heavenly Father—such an one will be of all men the most ready to confess that he has been led by ways he knew not, that he has been kept from evil in a manner he can scarcely understand, knowing only that when some special strong temptation has arisen, just at that very time some wise friend, some good book, or some holy thought has come also across his path to point out to him a way of escape from the temptation.

Paul says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And again, "When I am weak then I am strong." These phrases express the same meaning in different words, and are intended to warn us that we cannot stand firm by our own unaided strength, but that we are strong only so far as we lean upon a Higher Power, and look up in humble trust for guidance and for help in the conduct of our lives day by day and hour by hour.

If we are indeed supported by this faith and trust and hope, we shall be strong so as to be able to accomplish

all things, God willing, yet at the same time, far from being proud or puffed up, we shall only be the more humble and thankful that we have been kept from evil. Far from despising any, we shall look with loving pity upon those who have gone most astray, feeling, as we all must feel, that had we been tempted as many of these have been tempted, had we been surrounded with the evil influences which have surrounded so many of these, we also might have been even as the worst, and that it is only by God's mercy that we are what we are. Let this thought arouse in each of us a firm determination to do our part in rescuing from evil some of these wandering sheep, to do our part in leading some soul to know its Heavenly Father, and to feel the blessedness of filial trust in Him, and the joy of a life of well-doing; and may God grant His blessing on our efforts to assist in the fulfilment of Christ's prayer "that they may be kept from the evil."

NAMING THE BABY.

They gather in solemn council,
The chiefs of the household band;
They sit in the darkened chamber,
A conclave proud and grand;
They peer in the curtained cradle,
And each with one voice exclaim,
As they point to the new found treasure,
"The baby must have a name!"

They bring forth the names by dozens,
With many an anxious look;
They scan all the tales and novels,
They search through the good old Book;
Till the happy-voiced young mother
Now urging her prior claim,
Cries out in the fondest accents,
"Oh, give him a pretty name!"

"His grandpa was Ebenezer—
Long buried and gone, dear soul,"
Says the trembling voice of grandma,
As the quiet tear drops roll.
"Oh! call him Eugene Augustus,"
Cries the youngest of the throng.
"Plain John," says the happy father,
"Is an honest name and strong."

And thus is the embryo statesman,
Perhaps, or the soldier bold,
Respecting his future title,
Left utterly out in the cold.
And yet, it can matter but little
To him who is heedless of fame—
For no name will honour the mortal,
If the mortal dishonours the name.

THE CHRIST-CHILD.

BY FREDERIC FROTHINGHAM.

Long, long ago, a little child was born. Before his birth beautiful angels came to his young mother, in shape of high and wonderful thoughts about the little one whose life was bound up in her own. This was not unusual. It is apt to be the case with noble young mothers. But, if not unusual, it is wonderful and beautiful—a sign from God of the good that may be in a well-born and well-trained life. The mother of this child was of the best. A virgin soul was hers, because free from sordid thoughts and aims and loves. Wise, gentle, strong, she was, and full of wholesome piety. A virgin mother indeed, because in all the purity of a consecrated love she gave herself to the work of building up the young life placed in her care into a manhood that might realise even her heart's highest and most awful hope.

The child was remarkable chiefly for being like other children. At birth it was utterly helpless and feeble. It could not walk nor talk, nor was it remarkable for size or weight. At first it neither smiled nor wept, only cried its little, feeble, wailing cry, as others do. True, there was a glory round its head—ay, all over its little body; but that glory came from the beaming eyes and loving hearts that shone upon it and throbbed around it. To them it was God's miracle of beauty and glory. To them it was the dearest babe that ever drew breath. Though they were so poor and of such small account that no one cared to make room for them in the inn, and they had to make the dear baby's bed in a manger in the stable, what mattered it? Were they not rich in that darling treasure? Did not it make that manger nobler than any royal cradle? And, as they looked on the asses and the camels, did not their love-lit eyes see in the poor dumb creatures something like a human tenderness, and beam on them with a feeling of pity and good will? Ah, did they not hear in their own souls the very angels in the heavens singing of glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to man? Were

not such feelings ringing through their own souls — all that was good and beautiful in them kindled into rapture, and singing all through the night and through the livelong day? Neighbours and friends would not subdue that song; rather would they help sing it more and more. As each brought some little word of sympathy, love, or wonder, as they told of this or that strange thing which that night befell, as some spoke of singular thoughts that they had had, others of the splendour of the sky that night, others of dreams that had come to them, and others of the hopes of great things that filled their hearts, that fond mother felt new pride and love swell in her breast, and she wove all the fair things into a wreath of flowers of light with which to crown her babe.

A baby in a manger was an unwonted sight. Many would throng to see it, and some among them would even say that so strange a beginning meant a career as remarkable. Perhaps in her secret soul the fond, proud mother—she of the angelic thoughts and pure virgin aims—felt so, too; nay, was sure of it; but, too discreet to talk thereof, she cherished it as a prophetic conviction, only to be uttered in the noble training she should give her son. Beautiful mother! virgin indeed in the pure unselfishness that would hide itself in the heavenly life into which she aspired to lead that son.

Like other children, this child grew. It grew with and among other children, bad and good. Its mother's watchful love kept pace with it, guarded it from danger, warded off the slightest touch of wrong; certainly none the less because early in her boy she saw, oh! with what strange and thrilling wonder, signs of a fulfilling, higher than she had ever dared to think, of her heart's most lofty hope.

More and more clearly he showed himself to be a wondrous child. As other children do, he began to ask the great, deep, simple questions which man forever asks, and which no man has yet proved great enough to finally answer. But, unlike other children, he asked them more and more. Deeper and more eager grew his questionings. No mere spasms of curiosity were they in his young soul. Answer he must have, cost what it might. The young mother found herself awe-struck and trembling before a growing soul whose measure would soon pass all her power to span. But still her virgin instinct true kept fast her hold upon his young obedience and his filial faithfulness. Gladly she took him to the Great City where all the tribes of her people gathered every year, and where their most wise and learned men were found in the hope that among them he might get the answers which she knew not how to give. Surely in its glorious Temple could be found men able for the deepest questions of one so young. Simple-hearted mother! Vain hope! What man, through mere learning or even highest wisdom, is equal to the straight, searching questionings of an eager and earnest child? He could astonish the teachers to whom he went by the things he wanted to know. They could astonish him by their ignorance of what wise and learned men, it would really seem, ought to know.

He did not ask them senseless questions about texts of Scripture. Doubtless he already saw in many a text deeper meanings than they had thought of. But he did ask them questions that touched the very roots of life. He did not ask how they knew of the being of a God, but why men do not obey and follow the God they know. He did not ask proofs of immortality, but why men did not live so as to be fit for immortal life. He did not ask after the origin of evil, but why the evil within reach of all men was not cured; why grievous suffering remained; why men hated one another and were cruel, when it was better to be merciful; why sin abounded; and whether men could not be taught and led into the way of the divine life. His questions gathered into one: Could not man's suffering, sorrow, and sin be removed, and he be led into the blessed life of God? This tremendous question they could not answer. Not about such were they busy. Back to his lowly home he went, to seek in his own thought, and prayer, and life the

answer that he needed. The question burned within him like a fire.

He prayed hard for answer, sure that God could not fail to give it. And God answered his prayer. But how? Not by telling him what he wanted to know, but by whispering in his soul that he must himself make answer; that he must go into the world, must live the lovely life his soul's eye saw, must help others live it, loving God and one another, putting away their badness, and entering here and now into the heavenly goodness.

What an answer! And to a lad! Yet it was all.

What should he say to it? "Yes" or "No?" What *could* he say? He was poor, a boy, without friends or influence—what could he do towards so vast a work? Easily enough could he see what it meant. A glorious chance of doing good—enough to set a colder soul than his aflame unto whiteness. Yes; but besides, as his sober thought early saw, it meant poverty, loneliness, sorrow. It meant the giving up of home, and friends, and mother dear. It meant a tremendous work, to which he could not feel himself equal. It meant *following a guidance which no other saw and which none else believed in.* It meant sore trials, perhaps even death. How could he straightway answer yes? And yet he could not answer no. But still the question burned within his boyish soul—burned brighter and hotter as years passed and manhood came.

Manhood came. Men called him a child no more. And yet he was a child still. His dear mother and father saw in him their child, though he was fast growing into a life beyond their measure. To them he bore himself as a tender and obedient son. And so he was a child still. More and more, also, did he find himself to be the child of another Father whom no eye had ever seen, but with whom, in his own great language and way, he was learning to talk and walk day by day, and to whom he would be only a child for ever and ever.

But still the great question was unanswered.

Years passed. Life pressed on. The ripe hour came. Yes or no? A glorious man he saw, who had been a boy with him, and was near his own age, and who now came forth to speak for himself the immortal yes. He could stay no longer. Yes or no *he* must speak. In the loneliness of the desert, fierce temptations battling for his life, calmly and forever he answered yes.

That divine yes made him what we delight in and celebrate on Christmas-day. Around that yes gather all the glories that flash from the name of Jesus Christ. That yes struck the key-note of a new era—a new life for the world. In that yes was born an immortal hope for man, a great promise for every little child. Around that yes have gathered poem and song, legend and story. It gave us Christmas, with its joy, its love, its peace-making, its merry greetings, its kindly gifts. It gave us the Christ-child—child of man forever growing into a perfect child of God. Well may we be glad. Let us join the angels in singing, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will to men.

SAVONAROLA.

It is almost sad to think how entirely the memory of many great men passes away, even when they have exercised a wonderful influence not only on their own generation, but on those coming after. They lived, worked, and suffered for mankind, yet their very names are often forgotten. Will not many people on seeing the title of this paper ask: "Who was he?" Yet, some four hundred years ago Savonarola exercised a most powerful influence not only on the city of Florence, where he lived during his time of popularity, but his fame extended far and wide. He was a monk, and owed his greatness to his preaching, which seems to have been chiefly remarkable for intense earnestness. He had not been brought up to the monastic life, and when, at the age of twenty-three, he entered into a convent without previously consulting his parents, he gave as his reasons, "The misery of the world, and the sins of men." Truly there was sin enough for any soul that hungered after righteousness to shrink away overpowered

and crushed. Vice reigned unblushingly and unconcealed; no attempt to stay the moral ruin was made by the Church, for the priests were fully as degraded as the laity: vicious in their lives, and mercenary in their dealings with their flocks, which they often ravaged rather than guarded. An intense melancholy pervaded the young man's soul as he saw the shameless wickedness on every side, his heart burned within him, and yet there seemed no help.

We must not suppose him wanting in natural affection; indeed, his reluctance to leave his family held him back a long time from becoming a monk. The day before his departure he sat by his mother's side playing a melancholy air. She, fathoming his thought, said to him: "My son, that is a sign we are soon to part." Savonarola dared not trust himself to look at or speak to her, but went on touching his lute with trembling, faltering fingers.

Even when he had entered the convent it was long before the spirit within him could find vent. For seven years he led a peaceful, monotonous existence, engaged in the quiet duties of his calling (he had asked for the humblest tasks, such as gardening, &c.), one of the chief of which was the instruction of the novices; and it was not for some little time after he began to preach that he excited attention. First aroused to a sense of his strange powers by the fancy which a young courtier took to him, people began to come and stand round while he was giving his lectures to the novices. It is said he used to sit under a damask rose-tree in the convent garden, with his pupils, of whom he was intensely fond, standing in their white robes around him, and a gradually increasing audience beyond. This outer circle became so large that he consented to preach in the church, which, we are told, used to be thronged by an eager crowd of all classes and ages; indeed, so great was the pressure that the brethren of the convent could scarcely find room to stand. The chief burden of all Savonarola's preaching was to bid his hearers forsake their sins, and warn them of coming troubles unless they repented. Occasionally we read of softer and milder utterances, as when he spoke of prayer, and bade his auditors endeavour to feel God's presence, adding, "God does not delight in a multitude of words, but in a fervent spirit." Generally, however, he spoke what had been so long burning in his soul, crying out against sin. It was his intense earnestness and conviction that he was called to give a message to the world, that gave him the power which he wielded for some years over the people. Space forbids us to enter into the political troubles of the time, and tell how, in seasons of public excitement and danger, the people rushed to the cathedral where Savonarola (now made prior of his convent, San Marco) preached.

History tells us that during the years of Savonarola's power a marvelous change took place in the state of Florence. Vice was for the time suppressed, and shrank back in shame; the people strove to purify their city, and to make, as they were fond of saying, "Jesus Christ king of Florence." The preacher addressed all ranks and classes, the rich and great, magistrates and priests, exposing their wrongdoing, and calling upon them to aid in the cause of righteousness. It has been said how fond he was of children, and we read how in the carnival time he made an effort for their benefit. The Florentine boys were accustomed to unbounded license at that season, they set up "styles" in the streets which none, especially women, were allowed to pass without paying some money, with which at the end of the day they made a great supper; then they lighted bonfires, and fought with stones battles which often resulted in loss of life. Savonarola, assisted by one of the brethren, Fra Domenico, who was also fond of children, and was also devoted to his prior, set to work with these boys, organised them into bands under captains chosen by themselves, and persuaded them to set up *altars* in the streets, where they begged for the poor. Then, for their bonfires he gave them a huge "Bonfire of Vanities," made of the "vanities" they could collect, such as wigs, powder, patches, masks, &c. George Eliot, in "Romola," gives a

humourous description of how these boys pounced upon finely dressed *juvenile* old ladies, and persuaded them to part with their cherished adornments. Then on Palm Sunday a procession of children in white dresses, wearing red crosses, went round the city to found an institution Savonarola had long wished to form, for lending temporary loans on merciful terms to the distressed poor. As they passed along, sweetly singing hymns, the spectators wept and threw them money for their cause.

But unfortunately such a state of things could not last. Savonarola had his inner circle of followers, devoted with himself to the cause of right, but outside these were numbers willing enough to make use of his power, but caring little for the purity and holiness which were the desire of his heart.

He had had an immense influence with the people in forming their government when they had become free from the tyranny of the Medici. "If you would have a good government," he said, "it must be derived from God." He entreated the rich to deny themselves in order to relieve the general distress, and begged that the building of costly churches and convents might be discontinued, nay, even that the church plate and decorations should be sacrificed.

Sad to say, the Pope became his enemy because he spoke freely concerning the sins of the clergy. Already he had forbidden him to preach, and threatened him with excommunication, which menace was afterwards fulfilled. Savonarola felt and saw that his influence was on the wane, and occasionally made efforts to defend himself from the attacks of his unjust accusers. One "trial" he proposed seems to us very curious. He offered, if one of his accusers would do the same, to stand out on the piazza with the sacrament in his hand, and pray that God would send fire from heaven on his head if he were wrong. The scene must have been a singular one—crowds of people kneeling and praying as they were bidden that God would judge, Savonarola standing alone (for his accusers sent no champion) with the host raised towards heaven. We need not say no fire came down from the clear, blue sky, and at the end of the half-hour the prior and his brethren went back into the convent again, chanting "Te Deum laudamus." Doubtless to them and to the people the test was a satisfactory one, for the time of expecting miracles was not past, yet perhaps to Savonarola himself it was not altogether satisfactory, for when afterwards his enemies challenged him and his brethren to a similar contest he refused, and did all in his power to restrain the eager Fra Domenico, who had been the one originally challenged, and who was ready, nay, anxious to go into the fire in defence of his master. And the same spirit prevailed among all his adherents; so much so indeed that when, against his wishes, he had been driven to consent to the trial, he was constantly interrupted during the sermon by entreaties to be allowed to go into the fire in his defence. We read how, as he walked in the garden, a beautiful boy of noble family came and knelt down before him, holding up a paper on which was written his childish pledge, and begging to be allowed to go through the ordeal. The prior answered:—

"My son, thy goodwill is pleasing to God;" and turning to the monk who was with him, he said, "Truly, many such offers have I received, but none have given me so much pleasure as this child's."

On the eventful morning the convent of San Marco was early astir. Leaving the women in the church to pray, Savonarola and his brethren, accompanied by their adherents, conducted Fra Domenico to the place of trial, where an immense concourse of people had assembled. Domenico was all eagerness for the trial, but the champion on the other side was not forthcoming. Now that the time was so near he was afraid, and refused to undergo the test. It is believed the whole affair was planned by the new and corrupt Government for the prior's destruction. They now endeavoured to make a delay and hide the failure on their side by all sorts of paltry objections, such as that Fra Domenico's habit might be enchanted. The latter at once exchanged with a young nobleman of their party, who was overjoyed, thinking that he

was to be allowed to go through the fire.

From half-past twelve to vespers they all waited, the people growing more and more impatient for the promised spectacle, and at last Savonarola was told to withdraw with his monks. He remonstrated, saying that he and his party were ready, but to no purpose. Then the full tide of popular disappointment and fury turned upon the unoffending monks of San Marco. It was with difficulty the soldiers sent as escort could protect them on their way back to the convent. Arrived there, the prior entered the pulpit and told those waiting what had happened, and then retired to his cell, doubtless in exceeding sadness of heart. Never before had the people turned against him.

There is but little more to tell. On Palm Sunday, two years after the children's procession, the enemies of Savonarola aroused the mob, and an excited crowd rushed to the convent in such a state of frenzy that, meeting a young man going to vespers (not at San Marco, but at another church) and repeating to himself a verse or prayer, "What villain, still psalm-singing!" cried one, and the unhappy lad was hustled about until he lay dying on the hospital steps.

The worshippers in the church were startled by the arrival of the mob. The women hastily dispersed, but some of the men remained behind and began hasty preparations for defence. The prior was not at first present; when aware of what was happening, he donned his priest's robes, and taking the crucifix went into the church. He bade one of the monks named Benedetto who was hurrying forward with a sword in his hand put it away, and advanced towards the door to give himself up, but was held back by his friends. Then, gathering the brethren together, he led them singing hymns into the choir. A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, the besiegers got into the church, and then the ardour of the novices could not be restrained, and they defended themselves with whatever came to hand, crosses, crucifixes, &c. The same loyal spirit was manifest among all. A youth lay dying in the choir, and, receiving the Sacramen from Fra Domenico, said, "I hav never been so happy as now."

During a temporary lull, a messag came from the Government, requiring Savonarola, Fra Domenico, and Fra Salvestro to give themselves up. The prior withdrew into the library with as many of the brethren as could be collected, and in touching words bade them farewell, and went forth, accompanied by the faithful Domenico (Salvestro could not be found). Fra Benedetto vainly strove to get through the soldiers' ranks that he might go with his master. It is said that if Savonarola's enemies had wished to make his end as like as possible to that of Him he followed, they could not have done so more effectually, for as he was conducted along they struck, reviled, and taunted him.

The six weeks that followed are almost too dreadful to imagine. The three monks (for Fra Salvestro had afterwards been taken) were put to the most cruel tortures to make them "confess." We read that when Savonarola, after suffering agonies, was led back to his cell, he knelt down immediately and prayed, "Father, forgive them! They know not what they do."

He seems to have held to his doctrines except when delirious with suffering, and Domenico never faltered. Fra Salvestro was a weaker spirit, and tried vainly to escape the torture.

Being unable to find any ground of accusation, a notary was employed who perverted all their words. It is said this man when on his death-bed suffered agonies of remorse, crying that his sins were unpardonable—that Judas had betrayed one, but *he* three.

A month of quiet intervened while waiting for the arrival of the Pope's commissioners. Savonarola spent this time in writing one or two religious papers, amongst them, at the request of his gaoler, who was struck by the sanctity of his deportment, a rule of Christian life.

When the messengers arrived, and he and his brethren were condemned to be hanged, and then burned, the prior, who was engaged in prayer, heard the sentence with perfect calmness. A

onk (belonging to an order specially evoted to such work) came to spend ne night with him, and succeeded at is entreaty in procuring him an inter-iew with his brethren. He bade Domenico, who wished to be burnt, be illing to meet death in whatever nanner God willed, and Salvestro, who ished to address the people, be silent, s Christ was. He then begged the ttendant monk to let him rest his ead on his knee, and slept, sometimes miling and talking, till morning, when e thanked him gently, and then again met his brethren, and took the Sacra-ment with them.

They were led forth to the place of execution, where a scaffolding had been erected, and the fire prepared, and an immense concourse of people had as-sembled. When they were being deprived of their monks' frocks, Savo-narola observed with evident pain how much he had longed for it, and that he had *kept it unstained.*

As they passed up the narrow way to the scaffold some of the crowd taunted them, and pushed up pointed staves between the boards to hurt their bare feet. Others, however, felt pity, and offered food to Savonarola, who observed that "When men come to die they only want God's comfort." A priest asked him in what mood he endured this martyrdom, to whom he replied, kissing the crucifix, "Should I not die willingly for him who died for me?"

Salvestro was executed, the tears in his eyes, and crying, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Domenico followed, chanting a "Te Deum," and last of all Savonarola, repeating a creed under his breath. The people expected him to speak, but he scarcely looked at them; his spirit was already with God.

M. R.

TRUE GENTLEMEN.

"I BEG your pardon," and with a smile and a touch of his hat, Harry Edmon handed to an old man against whom he accidentally stumbled the stick which he had knocked from his hand. "I hope I did not hurt you."

"Not a bit," said the old man, cheerily; "boys will be boys, and it's best they should be. You did no harm."

"I'm glad to hear it;" and lifting his hat again, Harry turned to join the playmates with whom he had been frolicking at the time of the accident.

"What do you raise your hat to that old fellow for?" asked his companion, Charlie Gray. "He is only Giles, the huckster."

"That makes no difference," said Harry. "The question is not whether he is a gentleman, but whether I am one; and no true gentleman will be less polite to a man because he wears a shabby hat, or hawks vegetables through the streets, instead of sitting in a counting-house."

Which was right?

A CHRISTMAS PICTURE.

THE snow lay white on Christmas eve,
New spread around the cottage door;
But cheerily the fire-light fell
Within, upon the sanded floor.

Bright sprigs of holly decked the walls
And graced the clock upon the shelf,
That ticking softly seemed to tell
Of quiet comfort in itself.

The old man dozed beside the fire,
The children slept with breathings low;
While Mary watched for him whose step
Would now be muffled in the snow.

But, as her infant boy woke up
And nestled fondly on her knee,
The father came and saw within
The fairest picture he could see.

While entering gladly with him there
The pastor stood and kindly smiled,
Said he: "'Tis well, on Christmas eve,
To greet the mother with her child.

"I watched a star that shone so bright
It seemed to point the way to go,"
Then, as he pressed the grandsire's hand,
He said: "And here's the wise man too.

"I passed the hall on yonder hill
Where all in luxury and ease,
The squire and lady dwell; but still,
No picture there my eye could please.

"I saw no happy infant boy,
As here, upon his mother's knee;
No fair Madonna on the wall
Could bring the Christ-child near to me.

"Dear friends, if with the holy Babe
Came peace and gladness to the earth,
Should not the angels still seem near
At every lowly infant's birth?"

Thus, as he spoke, the good man turned,
And tenderly he read to them
The blessed story, always new,
Of Christmas eve at Bethlehem.

FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

It is not enough that man should have a God to worship. He needs also a father, and in the God revealed by Jesus he has a divinity and a parent.

The idea of God's fatherhood is sublime. We have often had God depicted to us as a terrible being of justice, one who damns and saves us at his pleasure, one who has only been appeased by the death of his Son, one who dooms his own offspring to eternal agonies; but as a Father, the religious world seems to rarely consider him. The great mission of Jesus was that we might know God, and know him as a loving parent. He teaches us to pray, "Our Father." He says, "I ascend to your God and my God, to your Father and my Father." Says Paul, "But to us there is but one God the Father;" again he writes, "One God and Father of all."

The idea of God and Father is thus joined: In our teachings it is a point never to be forgotten. We have a Father, yes, he is a universal Father.

The sun shines on the just and the unjust; so God, as a Father, loves his good children and his erring ones. We may, prodigal-like, wander from our Father, but we are not fatherless.

Canon Kingsley accuses the "religious world" with the loss of a belief which even the Greeks and Romans had of a Jesus—father of gods and men. He says, "Is not their doctrine, the doctrine to testify for which the religious world exists, the doctrine which, if you deny, you are met with one universal frown and snarl, that man has no Father in heaven, but that if he becomes a member of the religious world, by processes varying with each denomination, he may—strange paradox—create a Father for himself?"

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

Christ did not make God a Father to us. His love for his children existed before the tragic scene of Calvary was enacted. Hence we read, "God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son."

"Our Father!" what a blessed thought! The high, the holy, the great I Am is my Father! The material creations around me, the glorious heavens resplendent with stars, animals, plants, and other objects inanimate, tell me of his power; but in Jesus we see the loving character of our divinity, and are taught to cry, Abba, Father.

Dr. Channing beautifully speaks of God, as "a spiritual Father and fountain, as having an infinite interest in the human soul, as desiring its recovery and perfection, as ever present to give his Spirit, and as having sent his Son to manifest him in this character, and to awaken this faith in his spiritual love."

Says M. Renan, as quoted by Francis Lacox, B.A., "Jesus was not a patriot, like the Maccabees, or a theocrat, like Judas the Gaulonite. Boldly raising himself above the prejudices of his nation, he established the universal Fatherhood of God." Can we do better than to follow in his footsteps? It is possible to present God to men in such a manner that while they fear him they cannot love him. Is he a being who is only affected in our favour as he is wrought upon by the sight of bleeding wounds? Does he take delight in our sighs, groans, and deeds of penance? Must we consider a child as wholly depraved, hence unfit for heaven? Are we to serve God because we are powerless in his hand, and it is a stroke of policy to make the best of it? No! no! God appeals to our reason, our gratitude our love. While we grant, he deals out justice yet "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." "God is love." So John said, so Jesus has shown him, and so he appears as we glean knowledge of him in the New Testament. The idea of Father endears God to us; may we be followers of our God and Father, as dear children.

Prodigal, arise, go to the Father, he will meet and bless you. "The Father himself loveth you." Yes, "the Father himself loveth you." This was the gospel our Lord never failed to keep before the minds of those who listened to him. We all need this assurance of a heavenly Father's love. We have all wandered away from our home, and there is no encouragement to return like that which says "God is our Father,"

SCHOOL LIFE.

By Mrs. F. B. Ames.

CHIVALRY AND MODESTY.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Better conquest never canst thou make, than aim thy constant and thy nobler parts against giddy, loose suggestions."

Did you ever hear of Sir Philip Sidney and Chevalier Bayard? These knights went out into the world to conquer every kind of meanness in themselves and others. They have given us a word for a noble kind of manners that all may obtain by obedience to the rules of Magnanimity, Courtesy, and Purity.

1. *Magnanimity.—The strong should protect the weak:* the *big* boy or girl should look out for the smaller. Every kind of "bullying," every use of strength to *hurt*, is wicked and savage. As boys are generally stronger than girls, they are bound not to tease and annoy them. Men of honour feel that only a coward will treat women unkindly. So, too, a noble woman will be generous and fair towards men; girls who show contempt and ill-nature towards boys can hardly become truly noble women. The *bright* boy or girl ought to help the dull: to laugh at the mistakes of others is cruelty. Using strength of *mind* to hurt is "bullying." The *rich* boy or girl should consider the poorer; not to patronise, but to befriend: else we have that meanest of all prides—the "purse-proud." The *popular* boy or girl should seek the unpopular; for to share with others is the greatest privilege of the fortunate. The *well-dressed* should consider the ill-dressed: for can that be a true lady or gentleman who will let *clothes* stand in the way of noble manners?

2. *Courtesy.*—"*Manners are lesser morals.*" Noble manners make one fit to associate with noble people everywhere. So do not forget the little courtesies of school-life—the "Good morning," when you enter the school: the "Thank you," when you receive a favour; the shutting doors softly, walking quietly, and sitting in decent attitudes. The girls who make the gentlewomen are not those who giggle and talk loudly on the street or in horse-cars on the way to school; the boys who make the gentlemen are not those who crowd and push, but those who make room, on the sidewalk.

3. *Purity.*—Boys and girls may be the *more* gentlemanly and ladylike for associating as they do in some schools, or in going together to and from the school; or they may *degrade* and debase each other by silly, and even unclean words and acts. Do not have any acquaintances that the people at home do not know of, and drop any that begin to make you think things you would not tell your mother. Be careful not to take the first wrong steps: it is they that fill the grown up life with bitter regrets. "If I only hadn't begun!" Never be guilty of what silly people call "flirting;" nor pass secret notes; nor talk about "beaux" or "sweethearts." These things vulgarise and degrade very noble feelings. "I am always pained when I hear young people laughing and jesting about love and marriage," says Mr. Longfellow. There are many common interests in lessons, books, and games which boys and girls ought to have, and which will lift the thoughts each day into bright, clean places. Get the thoughts used to such places, then all your life grows nobler and purer, and you will see only what is true and pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see —God!"

Now, what is that word Sir Philip Sidney stands for! And what are the three words that go to make up his word.

THE CHILD OF HEAVEN.

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day!
We saw thine eyes break from the East,
And chase the trembling shades away,
We saw thee, and we blest the night;
We saw thee by thine own sweet light.

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter, day in night!
Heaven in earth and God in man!
Great little one, whose all embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth!

—*Richard Crashaw* (1637-1650).

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

ABOUT COMPLAINING.—"I think," says Mrs. Browning, "we are too ready with complaint in this fair world of God."

A RIGHT FAITH.—Let us have faith that right makes might, and dare to do our duty, for to help is to do the work of the world.

MAN AND TEA.—Men are frequently like tea—the real strength and goodness are not properly drawn out until they have been in hot water.

CHARITY.—A college student, in rendering to his father an account of his term-expenses, inserted: "To charity, £5." His father wrote back: "I fear charity covers a multitude of sins."

A HINT TO THE YOUNG.—A good name is best won by good deeds. There is no sure way of being well thought of, except by deserving well. "You have a little world before you," wrote Daniel Webster to a friend; "fill it with good deeds, and you will fill it with your own glory."

THE MOTHERLESS.—Sitting in the school-room, I overheard a conversation between a sister and a brother. The little boy complained of insults or wrongs received from another little boy. His face was flushed with anger. The sister listened awhile, and then, turning away, she answered, "I do not want to hear another word; Willie has no mother." The brother's lips were silent, the rebuke came home to him, and stealing away, he muttered, "I never thought of that." He thought of his own mother, and the loneliness of "Willie" compared with his own happy lot. "He has no mother." Do we think of it when want comes to the orphan, and rude words assail him?

HENRY WARD BEECHER'S FATHER.—It is pretty well known that Dr. Beecher, who went to Boston half a century ago "to root out Unitarianism," was the father of a great deal of theology quite different from old-fashioned theology, and his own soundness was never established to the satisfaction of some of the brethren. It is related that when he was under examination before a council of ministers, the test question was put: "Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?" and he declined to answer in the affirmative. Then arose a hair-splitting and heated discussion, till at last Beecher struck a fair compromise ground by declaring that if the divine will decreed the damnation of the whole council, it would meet with his entire acquiescence.

A NOBLE MOTHER.—The gentlemen at a dinner-table were discussing the familiar line, "An honest man 's the noblest work of God," when a little son of the host spoke up and said: "It's not true. My mother 's better'n any *man* that was ever made."

A PRETTY COMPLIMENT.—That was a pretty compliment a seven-year-old boy recently paid his mother. The family were discussing at the supper-table the qualities which go to make up a good wife. Nobody thought the little fellow had been listening or could understand the talk, till he leaned over the table and kissed his mother, and said: "Mamma, when I get big enough I'm going to marry a lady just like you are."

SAUL AND DAVID.—An old Scotch lady, who had no relish for modern church-music, was expressing her dislike for the singing of an anthem in her own church one day, when a neighbour said, "Why, that is a very old anthem. David sang that anthem to Saul. To this the old lady replied, "Weel, weel, I noo for the first time understan' why Saul threw his javelin at David when the lad sang for him."

ROSA BONHEUR.—It is said that Rosa Bonheur did not show any remarkable genius when she was a child. She was of a resolute and determined temperament, and her days were spent in wandering about the fields, and making friends with dumb animals. Her father was a poor drawing teacher, and when he apprenticed her, at the age of twelve, to a dressmaker, she became ill, so distasteful was the confinement. He took her home, sent her to school, and here she began to display the artistic talent she possessed. She is now the most celebrated animal painter in all Europe.

THE following are the terms for supplying the CHRISTIAN FREEMAN:—

	s.	d.
1 copy, per year	2	0
2 copies "	3	6
3 " "	4	6
5 " "	6	0

Twelve copies and upwards at 1d. per copy, post free, when ordered direct from Mr. Spears.

Communications to be addressed to the Rev. R. SPEARS, 19, Mornington-road Bow-road, London, E.

Printed by GEORGE REVEIRS, (successor to S. TAYLOR), Graystoke-place, Fetter-lane, London, and the trade supplied by EDWARD T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand, London.